

# NEW URBAN NEWS

COVERING DESIGN &amp; DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN-SCALE NEIGHBORHOODS

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## Pave paradise? No, ditch the parking lot

*Planning expert Donald Shoup offers a novel solution to places damaged by too much parking.*

PHILIP LANGDON

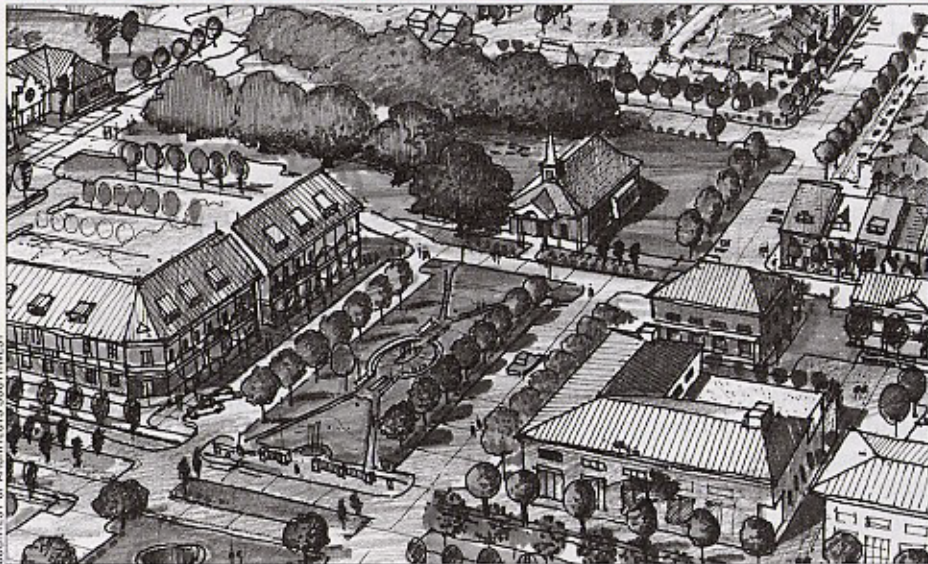
For years urbanists have tried a wide assortment of tactics to reduce the damage that parking inflicts on communities. Now comes UCLA urban planning professor Donald C. Shoup with a radical, yet carefully argued prescription: Governments should stop requiring off-street parking. In *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Shoup systematically attacks ingrained ideas that have prevented urbanists from asking the most basic question of all: Why should governments require parking other than on the streets?

"Few people now recognize parking requirements as a disaster because the costs are hidden and the harm is diffused," Shoup says in the 734-page, \$59.95 hardcover from APA Planners Press. He contends that "parking requirements cause great harm: they subsidize cars, distort transportation choices, warp urban form, increase housing costs, burden low-income households, debase urban design, damage the economy, and degrade the environment." His verdict: "Off-street parking requirements have all the hallmarks of a great planning disaster."

A Yale-trained economist and former director of the Institute of Transportation Studies at UCLA, Shoup says the longstanding municipal practice of assigning parking requirements is nonsense. "Urban planners set minimum parking requirements for every land use, but the requirements often seem pulled out of thin air or based on studies that are poorly conceived," he says. "In turn, these faulty standards and policies are perpetuated as they are copied from one city to the next."

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A church terminates a square in the town center of Acadia Plantation, a new town under construction in Louisiana. See page 6 for an article on religious buildings in new urban communities. For a story on traditional neighborhood developments in Louisiana, see page 8.



COURTESY OF ARCHITECTS SOUTHWEST

## New urbanists design town for deaf

ROBERT STEUTEVILLE

One of the boldest new urban visions to date was created in late March for a field in South Dakota that would not ordinarily be a candidate for large-scale development. But this is no ordinary project.

Laurent, a town designed for the hearing-impaired and for sign language users, may be the first community of its type anywhere. It also may become the first new urban community incorporated as a town. Another unusual aspect of Laurent is its Interstate highway orientation.

Named after French educator Laurent Clerc, who pioneered sign language in the US in 1816, the town is planned at an Interstate 90 interchange 30 miles west of Sioux Falls. The \$100 million project is slated to break ground

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## NEW URBAN UPDATE

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merce back to the core.

■ **Bethlehem Township**, Pennsylvania, recently adopted comprehensive plan and zoning amendments that will allow a town center, a traditional neighborhood development (TND), and a hospital district influenced by smart growth principles to move forward. The amendments include a town center district, a mixed-use overlay, and a commercial enhancement overlay on parcels that were mostly zoned for conventional commercial or light-industrial/office uses.

While not a form-based code per se, the amended zoning ordinance contains language and design guidelines that support New Urbanism. Thomas Comitta Associates drafted the amendments with Calthorpe Associates, which is creating the plan for the 150-acre town center. The developers are Forest City of Cleveland, Ohio, and Bayer Properties of Birmingham, Alabama. The TND was designed by Martin Architectural Group for developer Wagner Enterprises. Bethlehem Township is a suburban and rural municipality of 21,000 residents east of the City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

■ The City of Miramar, Florida, approved final agreements necessary for Rockefeller Group Development Corporation and Kimco Developers to begin construction of the private development phase of the 54-acre **Miramar Town Center**. Planned by Torti Gallas & Partners of Silver Spring, Mary-



Miramar town center plan

land, the project includes 500 units, 115,000 square feet of commercial space, and civic buildings. The city, which purchased the land in 2001, has already built an attractive municipal building in the center.

■ As residential construction moves closer to urban rail lines, bridges, and freeway ramps, **developers are increasingly using sound-muffling windows** and other techniques to keep noise out of new housing. A window wall for a 60-story condo tower next to a San Francisco bus terminal will have two panes, one slightly thicker than the conventional

## CLASSIFIED

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